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former professor. It is time for Mr. Smith to learn that he will estrange all of his friends in America, even his former Leipzig classmates, if he continues his uncalled-for and childish personal abuse of Delitzsch.

Semitic students are under many obligations to the editors of BSS., and to those who have contributed to its pages.

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THE FABLES OF BIDPAI.*

Perhaps no one book in the world's literature has had such a unique history as the collection of stories which goes under the name of "*Kalilag and Damnag*." Originating over two thousand years ago in the pious circles of the followers of Gautama and destined only for a small band of the faithful, they have, by means of their inherent *humanity*, traveled thousands of miles beyond their original home, have formed a sort of human bond between different peoples divided by nationality, religion and history, and have been translated into almost every human tongue. No one can doubt their inherent power; and the study of the journeyings of these Buddhistic tales is one of the most fascinating to the philologist and literateur alike.

In the handsomely gotten-up volume before us Mr. Jacobs has given us a faithful reprint of the English translation of the Fables of Bidpai made in the year 1570 by Thomas North, bearing the title, *The Morall Philosophie of Doni: Drawne out of the ancient writers, etc., etc.* The original editions have both become very scarce and the students of Tudor English Prose will no doubt be very thankful for this reprint of a work of one who "came just midway between the exaggerated Ciceronianism of Berners, Elliot, and Ascham . . . and the exaggerated Guevarism (if it must be so) of Lyly and his school" (p. liv). As this English translation is only the last of a series, the former parts of which are now at our disposal, it is, in itself, of little interest to oriental students.

The introduction, however, of some sixty-seven pages is well worth careful perusal. It is a pity that it has not been detached from the work itself and sold separately. We find in it a careful résumé of much of the work done in regard to this literature. One new point Mr. Jacobs has brought out for which "find" he has earned the thanks of all students of these tales.† That some of the Arabic and Hebrew manuscripts had contained illustrations to these tales was already known. It was left for Mr. Jacobs to show that in all probability the Sanskrit

* The earliest English version of the Fables of Bidpai, "*The Morall Philosophie of Doni*," by Sir Thomas North, whilom of Peterhouse, Cambridge. Now again edited and induced by Joseph Jacobs, late of St. John's College, Cambridge. London: Nutt, MDCCCLXXXVIII., pp. LXXXII., 264.

† Cf. *Athenæum*, May 12, 1888, p. 600, and an article entitled "Jewish Diffusion of Folk-Tales" in *The Jewish Chronicle*, London, June 15, 1888, p. 12.

original also contained these or similar illustrations. We believe with him that "this migration of illustrations may one day afford as interesting a chapter in the history of art as the fables themselves have given to the history of literature" (p. xxiii).

We are still further indebted to Mr. Jacobs for pointing out the evident connection which exists between these illustrations and the *Jatakas* or *Birth Stories* which were sculptured around the stupas of Amaravati and Bharhut, as early as the third century B. C., and specimens of which may still be seen in the British Museum. This discovery with reference to the illustrations may at some time bring order into the chaos which now reigns in the codification of the Arabic manuscripts of *Kalilah and Dimnah*.

Whether Mr. Jacobs' suggestion of an independent translation from the Sanskrit into Arabic (p. xix) will hold good, remains yet to be seen. The only authority upon which such a supposition can be based is a statement of a wandering Jew, Abraham ibn Ezra (12th century). Dr. Steinschneider himself does not seem to lay much stress upon this account.* He has proved conclusively that Ibn Ezra himself never visited India,† and his statement, therefore, is at second or third hand.

There is another point in Mr. Jacobs' Introduction which is worthy of note. On p. xxxiii he combats the prevailing tendency to refer all such "märchen" back to an Indian source. Many scholars will be with him in working upon the "common human nature underlying" many of these tales for an explanation of a number of curious coincidences. Very interesting is the parallel Mr. Jacobs draws between one of the well known stories of *Uncle Remus* and a passage from the *Jataka* of the Demon with the Matted Hair (p. xliv). Still, for our fables of Bidpai, the Indian origin is quite certain, and even Mr. Jacobs does not hesitate to say (p. xlix) that "the fables of Bidpai are the fables of Buddha."

With a Buddhistic background the prominence given to the animals becomes perfectly clear; and the work done by Benfey and Rhys-Davids in identifying some of these tales with the Buddhistic Birth Stories becomes very fruitful.‡ If we accept Mr. Rhys-Davids' chronology this would place the collection of these stories between 400 and 200 B. C.

Mr. Jacobs writes a terse English style, but very often one feels an antiquarian research after unusual and obsolete words. This may fit in with the "inducing" and re-editing of an old book, but it jars somewhat upon one's ears.

* ZDMG, xxiv., 326.

† ZDMG, xx., 430.

‡ An interesting parallel to this is the history of the *Barlam and Josaphat* romance which contains the biography of Buddha (ZDMG, xxiv., 326, xxxii. 584). In this way Buddha, in the form of Josaphat, was canonized by the Church of Rome. Keith-Falconer, *Kalilah and Dimnah*, p. lii, note 1.

§ See p. xli and *The Academy*, Aug. 11, 1888, p. 87.

If I mistake not, this attempt has led Mr. Jacobs astray in one or two instances and has brought down upon him the ire of such a man as Sir Richard Burton.

I would also call attention to the useful *Analytical Table of Contents* and *Pedigree of the Bidpai Literature* attached to the introduction.

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PEISER'S CONTRACT TABLETS.*

The long and extremely interesting Assyrian historical inscriptions, with their vivid descriptions of murder and pillage, of siege and battle, have, up to this time, received more study than any other class of texts. Some of the more important have been repeatedly edited or translated or both. And this was natural. Here was ready-made history, which needed only the interpreter's skill to place it within ready control of our own historiographers, who were glad of the opportunity of reconstructing the story of forgotten empires and kingdoms. But these historical inscriptions, great and numerous though they are, are yet but a small portion of the vast Assyrian literature already recovered. And just as Green's *History of the English People*, with its brilliant pictures of the development of science, art and literature, is of a higher order of historical writing than many a previous story of that same land, which spoke only of kings and their wars, just so will there be a higher and better knowledge of Assyria when, to our acquaintance with the deeds of kings as recorded on historical inscriptions, there is added a knowledge of the daily life of the people.

Fortunately we have rich sources of history outside the royal annals. We have also an extensive religious literature, many treatises on medicine, and not to mention yet other sources, we have the so-called contract tablets,—the deeds of sale and transfer and loan,—which will give to us, when made accessible, a complete picture of the everyday life of the people. When these have been translated and published, there will be needed only the genius of a Green to give us a picture of Assyrian life and history more detailed and more accurate than has yet been written even of Greece!

Unfortunately, for us who would fain make haste in this process of history-writing, these contract tablets are difficult, usually difficult to decipher from the clay, almost always difficult to translate when deciphered. Because of their great present importance and still greater future importance, and because of the difficulty which they present to all workers, we heartily welcome every attempt to

* KEILSCHRIFTLICHE ACTEN-STUECKE AUS BABYLONISCHEN STAEDTEN. Von Steinen und Tafeln des Berliner Museums in Autographie, Transcription und Uebersetzung herausgegeben und commentiert von Dr. F. E. Peiser. Nebst zwei Lichtdrucktafeln. Berlin: Wolf Peiser Verlag. 1889.